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# THE DOLOROUS BLADE

Being A Brief Account of the Adventures of  
that good Knight of the Round Table  
SIR BALIN, called "Le Savage"

*Done into Rhyme by*

SAMUEL DONALD NEWTON



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BEING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE ADVENTURES OF  
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ROUND TABLE

*SIR BALIN, CALLED "LE SAVAGE"*

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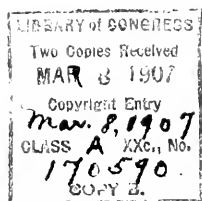
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*The Gorham Press, Boston*

TO M. W. G.

I would I had some rhyme, Sweet, fit to grace  
Those magick letters shadowing thy name  
Which I—too bold—have ventured here to place  
Upon my book: our book; for now, fair dame,  
Thou art at last my partner ('tis a shame  
'Twere not more worthy) and an lovest me  
Thou'lt so continue, for, than all the fame  
Parnassus holds, 'twere sweeter if it be  
That thou canst smile on this I dedicate to thee.



## THE DOLOROUS BLADE

### I

Anon, it came to pass that at the court  
Appeared a damsel, wondrous fair, who wore  
About her waist (indeed it were no sport  
To be accoutred thus, and passing sore  
It burdened her) a belt from which she bore  
A lordly sword, encrusted thick with gold  
And jewels bright, of which she would implore  
Some knight to her relieve, if one so bold  
Were found who from that shieve could draw the  
blade so cold.

## II

“ But he must be a knight of guileless name,”  
Declared the maid, “ None other need assay—  
’Twere no avail—past many halls I came  
But nowhere found the knight (alas, the day!)  
Could draw this brand.” King Arthur cried  
    straightway  
“ ’Tis well, for many knights of marlous worth  
Here live, and at this court where I hold sway  
One must be found, if such there be on earth  
Who can remove this grievous weight from round  
    thy girth!”

### III

He said: then on the hilt he placed his hand  
And gave a mighty pull—alas, in vain!  
And after him all barons of the land  
Each vainly strove; but not a knight could gain  
The sword, until the weary maid was fain  
Seek other courts: at last Sir Balin tried  
(The meanest of all knights, who bore the stain  
Of being pris'ner:) see the blade now glide  
Quickly from out the shieve when he his hand  
applied.

## IV

Much marvel had the king and all the court  
That one so lowly knight should have achieved  
When all other had failed (for 'tis no tort  
To wear coarse garments if the heart hath cleaved  
E'er to the good). Straightway the king reprieved  
Sir Balin's durance, saying they did ill  
Who wronged so true a knight: but some were  
grieved  
At his preferment, and men's ears would fill  
With stories that he drew the sword by witchcraft's  
will!



# V

Sir Balin, when he looked upon the blade,  
Was wondrous pleased therewith, and would have  
ta'en

The scabbard too, an that he could; the maid,  
Howe'er, held to't and straightway did complain,  
“ Give up the sword:” but Balin said again,  
“ Nay, that I will not, till in open fight  
One wins it from me, or that I am slain;  
And wield I ever will this sword with might  
To undo evil and to repossess the right!”

## VI

The maid replied: “ ’Twere better not, sir knight,  
For from this steel, an that you it withhold,  
Much ill is fated, since in grievous plight  
’Twill bathe your nearest friend (for you’re too  
bold)

In his own life-blood: and it hath been told  
That he the stroke most dolorous ever known  
Must strike, who wields this blade: and ere hath  
rolled

One year from now his life will have been blown  
Into the vast unseen: give back the sword I own!”

## VII

But Balin answered only "I have said,"  
And strode from Camelot: I will not stay  
To tell how that the king turned flaming red  
That one his knight should rush so rude away  
Nor how he grieved at what the maid did say;  
Nor will I stop to hear the lying tale  
How Balin slew a lady fair that day  
(Averring witchcraft:) for we must not fail  
To follow quick the knight as he his path may  
scale.

## VIII

Now, this Sir Balin was but rudely found,  
His chain-mail rusty and his target lost,  
No banneret above him and the sound  
Of his poor charger's jaded footsteps crossed  
The ear but meanly: no proud feather tossed  
Upon his helm, which battered was with flaw;  
Yet in his gauntlet was the blade embossed,  
The magic sword which he alone could draw:  
His saddle held a spirit bound by no weak law!

## IX

“ Sir Balin le Savage, now dress thyself:  
'Tis Lanceor of Ireland calleth thee,  
Fresh from King Arthur's court, where thou by  
    pelf  
Won that fair sword which in thy hand I see  
And with it slew a damsel guiltily  
To thy soul's hurt; then left the court alone,  
Without the king's consent, which all agree  
Is treachery vile, whereat the king makes moan  
And hath sent me, his knight, who call his cause  
    mine own!”

## X

Sir Balin turned: a glittering sight he saw;  
A knight in brightest armor habited  
On which the sun lay dazzling: not a flaw  
In gold or silver plate there was; instead  
A mirrored surface: on a steed well bred,  
Of purest white, whose trappings swept the ground,  
He pranced, and as he nearer drew the dread  
Device upon his lordly shield was found,  
The badge of Erin, golden harp of mellow sound!

## XI

“Thou liest bravely, prince!” Sir Balin cried;  
“I slew no damsel in King Arthur’s halls;  
Here on my troth as knight it is denied;  
Nor gained I this keen sword by pelf; those walls,  
If they could speak, despite the grievous falls  
Of mighty knights before me, would allow  
I won it fairly; this my spirit palls  
At treacherous deed, and rightly knowest thou  
I left King Arthur under leave: have at thee now!”

## XII

They met together in the middle plain  
With mighty clash of arms: the good yew lance  
That Balin bore the other's shield did gain  
And laid him low, but Lanceor's just did glance  
The tip of Balin's helm, as it did dance  
Before his eyes, and left him whole; with speed  
Leaped Balin from the saddle and askance  
He flashed the dolorous blade: there was no need,  
For Lanceor's spirit with a grievous wound did  
    bleed.



### XIII

Anon, as Balin mourned that he should be  
The death of this so good a lord and knight  
And pondered if this were the stroke that he  
Were doomed to strike when first that blade he  
dight,

There came a damsel, passing fair to sight,  
With floating locks unkempt and streaming eyes,  
Her garments disarrayed, her figure slight  
Trembling with grief; herself upon the prize  
Flinging where now her noble lord and lover dies!

#### XIV

Then quickly she upstarted, in her hand  
Sir Lanceor's bright sword, which Balin tried  
To take from her anon, but she the brand  
Clung to the closer and his suit denied  
Till he was fain desist for that she cried  
As though in pain: then she the falchion set,  
The hilt stuck fast i' the earth (again she sighed,  
While Balin stood aghast) and last she let  
Her soul depart, as, falling, she the cold steel met!

XV

Much moan made Balin o'er the untimely fate  
Of this fair damsel and this noble lord  
Who loved so dearly other and who wait  
Together now before the door which barred  
The realms of Paradise: him seemed 'twere hard  
That such a mournful venture should be first  
To meet his late-recovered arms, ill-starred,  
And well he knew now till he durst  
Some noblest deed, his name at Arthur's court  
were curst.

## XVI

Anon, as thus he mourned, he was made ware  
Of Merlin, the great wizard, who would sore  
Upbraid him for the mischance happened there  
Whereby so fair a maid was bathed i' the gore  
Of her own heart, which mightily he swore  
Sir Balin should have stopped: then thus he spoke:  
“Curst be this spot, for here a fearful score  
Wiil 'tween the two best knights on earth be broke  
(Yet neither shall draw blood from other's heart  
of oak!)

## XVII

Be this spot known the vilest under heaven,  
For here the Dolorous Blade in anger first  
By man on man was drawn, and here were riven  
Two souls from out their bodies; here shall burst  
Full many noble hearts: forever curst  
Be this dread spot! Take up yon sword, sir knight,  
For thou hast need of two such, thou who durst  
The Dolorous Blade so wield: full many a fight  
Thou'lt know, ere that descends on thee the end-  
less night!

## XVIII

Take up Sir Lanceor's sword, for thou in strife  
Must wound the man most worshipful now known,  
Whereby three realms, in wretchedness all rife,  
Twelve years must mourn, and he, this man, shall  
moan

Full many years ere that be overgrown  
His hurt: take up the sword, sir knight, for nigh  
Approaches Balan, thy twin brother, blown  
To thee: thy nearest kin; he who did lie  
With thee in cradled infancy: with thee must die!"

## XIX

“ A truce to gloomy prophecies, sir seer;  
I trust them not,” said Balin, “else would I  
Cause yet another life (to me more dear)  
Expire o’ this sword: as did this maiden die,  
I’d follow her, to prove your words a lie:  
Yet truly would I my own brother see!”  
“ Look up!” said Merlin, nor could he deny  
That Balan stood there, like as he could be  
To his own self, save that in better harness he.

## XX

Long stood they thus together, gazing mute  
Each at the other: last, Sir Balan spoke:  
“ Aye, truly heard I that they did transmute  
Your chains to liberty, your bitter yoke  
To victory, in Arthur’s halls, the cloak  
Of knighthood giving back, and hasted then  
To greet my brother gladly as he woke  
From his long thralldom, taking among men  
The place his errant knighthood gives him once  
again!”



## XXI

To whom Sir Balin: “ Softly, brother; see,  
Full bitter deeds my first return to arms  
Have crowned: and here is Merlin who on me  
Hath worser things denounced: full of alarms  
He’s filled my life; but I will prove his harms  
(God willing) false: yet would I gladly know  
Where I may find, full-coursing o’er his farms,  
In rage defiant, Arthur’s bitterest foe:  
To gain his grace, I’d make a giant’s blood to  
    flow!”

## XXII

Again spake Merlin: “ Him can I supply:  
One hight Rience of Gore, of North-Wales lord,  
A most vile monarch (none can it deny)  
And pagan, who for many years hath warred  
With thrice five kings his vassals, falchion scarred  
Against King Arthur, and who now doth plot  
A quick invasion of the land, ill-starred,  
Unneath 'tis stopped and the leader caught!”  
“ We'll take the venture,” cried they, “'gainst this  
man distraught!”

### XXIII

The great King Arthur sat upon his throne,  
Fair-featured Guenevere close by his side,  
While down the hall in ever widening zone  
Were ranged the lords who at the court abide  
And knights o' the Table Round; when with a  
    stride  
Up to the dais, his black lance reversed,  
Approached, grief shaken, trembling with the tide  
Of human woe which all his soul immersed,  
North-Wales' fierce lord, great Arthur's bitterest  
    foe and worst.

## XXIV

Down on the floor he bent his haughty knees  
And 'twixt our king's fair palms his gnarled hands  
In homage passed, while saying it did please  
Two knights who were his victors such commands  
To place on him: two doughty knights: there  
    stands  
None in these halls their peers, as he might think,  
Not even Launcelot, whose fame expands  
(He said) with Christendie, and would not shrink  
At any limits, stretching to the earth's last brink!

## XXV

That he had sixty coursers in his train,  
Well armed and fearless as on earth do ride,  
And was himself a knight (if he could gain  
Aught by such idle boast) whom no ill tide  
Had e'er before o'erwhelmed, but when they vied,  
These sixty with the twain, they scattered were  
And he was bound: and yet these knights did hide  
Their true names from him: one of them howe'er,  
Within each mighty hand a flashing sword did bear

## XXVI

Which he full nobly wielded and did fight  
On either hand a foe, as though, indeed,  
Two souls he had and each a belted knight  
With perfect purpose, from the other freed.  
A message gave they him, which he should heed  
And now delivered, for it seemed that they  
Offended had, and by some luckless deed,  
Against their king, and therefore far they stray  
Until they're pardoned, for which guerdon now  
they pray!

## XXVII

King Arthur cried: “ We graciously agree  
This pardon to, their damage be what may,  
For ne’er our royal heart withholds rich fee  
From those who service such as this can pay  
Unto their king: there vacant stand today  
Two seats o’ the Table Round, which they must  
fill,  
And that they are not now o’ that rank and sway,  
As much I think they are: but I could will  
To know their names and cognizance of herald’s  
quill.”

## XXVIII

And Balan heard the summons and his way  
Took to the court, for long the wilderness  
Had been his home: but Balin answered nay,  
For God's deep wildwood (so he did confess)  
Called him afar and he resolved to press  
To greater victories, if there were more  
Ordained for him; yet none, I'm told, the less  
Fair Arthur gained a knight, for he of Gore  
A valiant vassal proved, in bloody fights a score.



## XXIX

And for six moons erred Balin and he knew  
A thousand knightly deeds of willing aid  
To sorrow-stricken damsels: he o'erthrew  
Ten mighty giants with his dolorous blade  
And seven with the other: well he played  
His part, and soon of lesser knights a train  
Him followed, and with them he did invade  
Far distant parts of Britain, and did gain  
His fill of glory; yet without one honor-stain.

### XXX

But still, withal, where'er he went, he felt  
A hidden impulse to review the ground  
Where brave Sir Lanceor died and where did melt  
With his the damsel's soul, for that the sound  
Of Merlin's gruesome warning did redound  
Within his brain and drew him from afar,  
As birds come back in springtime to the mound  
Where they had nested erst, or as the star  
Returns each night on darkening of the sun's  
    bright car.

### XXXI

So, after six month's tarrying, he came  
And, lo, a great, flat stone concealed the spot,  
'Neath which had Merlin, by his wiles and flame,  
Reposed the dead; and o'er the stone there fought  
Two doughty knights, whose warfare set at naught  
All fighting else, so fierce it was and wild;  
Yet Balin noted that none blood was brought  
For all the blows that each on other piled  
In weary multitude and wealth unreconciled!

## XXXII

“Why strive ye, knights?” cried Balin, as he  
neared

The scene of combat, but none answer they  
Save more redoubled blows: then Balin feared,  
For true came Merlin’s prophesy that day  
And Balin knew full well there were no way  
But that the rest must follow: still there fell  
The feast of blows, nor could he force a stay  
Till that they both sank back, their mighty swell  
Of fierceness spent, and yet the bards no victory  
tell.

### XXXIII

Then off came helmets: what is this they saw?  
'Twas Launcelot and Tristram Lyonesse,  
The two best knights of Christendie, the awe  
Of Moors, who each for other might confess  
Such love as all love otherwise were less,  
Save for their lady-queens; but each was clad  
In stranger cognizance and unwont dress,  
So that they knew not other, but had bade  
Defiance bold, as ever 'twixt strange knights is had.

## XXXIV

These knights craved Balin stay and take good  
cheer,

For they had heard his prowess whom all own

As third in true and chivalrous career,

Next to themselves, and they would fain have  
known

Him better, but he begged to be alone,

For that the sayings of the wizard still

Rang in his ears, and he would pray the Throne

Whereon's the King of kings to steel his will

Ere that the time were come those sayings to fulfil.

## XXXV

So Balin prayed and after slowly passed  
Upon his way; dire were his thoughts and strange,  
Like to Childe Roland's when he found at last  
The dark tower road: one knight alone might range  
With him; the bearded Heleus, (a change  
From all the pompous, almost kingly train  
Was wont to follow him o'er field and grange,  
His vassals all.) Him, too, Sir Balin fain  
Would have dismissed, but that he sorely begged  
    remain.

## XXXVI

'Twas then, as passed these knights o'er moor and  
field

In silence (for that Balin's soul was dumb  
With heavy musings) one behind cried "Yield!"  
And at the word his horse's clatterings come  
With quick resounding: Heleus' frame grew numb  
With fear uncanny, as were ghost anigh,  
But Balin turned and siezed his lance aplumb,  
And dressed himself; yet could he naught descry  
To cause alarm, though still the clashing hoof-  
beats fly!



## XXXVII

Then Heleus fell, sore-pierced to the heart  
And from the rear, as by a caitiff lance  
Held by some dastard, daring not the part  
Of honest knight, who never strikes askance  
(As churls are fain!) yet still to Balin's glance  
None foe appeared: for why? A magic cloak  
He wore, which him with darkness did enhance  
And hid from view: Sir Balin dealt a stroke  
Deep with the Dolorous Blade, though naught its  
    passage broke!

## XXXVIII

But when he struck again, would not await  
The recreant such another, but did fly  
Far off the field, still in his darkened state  
Of cowardice. Sir Balin loud did cry:  
“ Full vengeance deal thou, vengeance, Lord on  
high!  
Against this demon who thus foully takes  
Another's life in combat false: may I  
The instrument the great Creator makes  
To right this damage be: such form mine office  
takes!”

### XXXIX

And Garlon heard (for so the fiend was called,  
Or man with fiendish sprite, who Heleus broke,)  
And 'neath his caitiff veil which him enthralled  
He shook like aspen leaf; but one word, spoke  
Within Sir Balin's breast, (" 'Tis well!") awoke  
Rejoicings there: still, many times anon  
The knight and fiend encountered and the yoke  
Of death full many comrade squires must don  
Ere rich-deserved revenge might be by Balin won.

## XL

There was a boy, half risen to man's years,  
And yet more girl than boy, for woman's art  
Alone had kept him, chased away his fears  
And cherished him as prompts a woman's heart:  
His aspect thus; the hair in midst y-part  
O'er's forehead framed his dimpled cheeks in curls,  
Hung round his shoulders, drooping soft and  
smart  
Down to a waist trim yet as any girl's,  
A waist enroped round with dreamy, deep-sea  
pearls;

## XLI

His garments, sheer and light, in ample folds,  
Shaped like a maid's, for exercise unfit,  
Approached his ivory ankles (whose fair molds  
Seemed formed for dancing) and therethrough  
might flit

Visions of graceful limbs, well-formed and knit,  
Revealed, yet hidden: his fair face above,  
As yet unmarked with beard, with frankness lit,  
Showed truth unmasked, candor, maiden love  
And gentleness to reign in's mind, all else above.

## XLII

Sir Balin, passing by with princely train  
(His fasting o'er) beheld the lovely boy  
Hard by the roadside, but a look of pain  
Did cloud his face and his fair being cloy,  
For in his hand he held a broken toy;  
A robin, limp and pierced to the heart  
By a sharp arrow, all the lively joy  
Y-spilt and wasted by the feathered dart,  
O'er which the lad made moan and bitter tears  
upstart.

### XLIII

“What ails the silly bird,” bewailed the youth,  
“That it none flutters, as it did anon  
Up in the tree? Alas, mine heart is ruth  
(It were so happy) now its joy be gone!  
It was so fair a mark to shoot upon  
Mine arrow left my hand ere I had thought:  
I meant no harm, nor thought its orison  
Would so y-stop; what is’t mine hand hath  
wrought  
That silent woe hath thus its joyaunce pure dis-  
traught?”

## XLIV

“ ’Tis dead!” said Balin. “ Dead!” cried  
Galahad:

“ What is’t to die; this thing ye call death?  
Must all it suffer, and must all that’s glad  
Thus turn to sorrow?” “ So the good Book  
saith,”

Said Balin: “ All must render up their breath  
When He us calls, and so our naked souls,  
Bright with our knightly deeds, or sunk aneath  
Our guilty ones, must go where He unrolls  
The scrip of Fate and grace or doom to us out-  
doles!”



## XLV

All while the youth, fair Galahad, had bent  
Low to the ground his head, but at this speech  
Back threw his erring curls that so had strent  
Around his cheeks; then did his eyes upreach  
To see the speaker; but when through the breach  
Thus made, he saw the panoply so grand  
Arrayed afore him, straight he 'gan beseech  
Kind mercy for his faults, for that the band  
He thought were Seraphim who round the Lord  
do stand

## XLVI

(So bright were they) and Balin that Dread One  
None dare name lightly: then, "Oh, God!" he  
cried:

"Call me not God," said Balin, "as the sun  
Is brighter than the dark, or as the bride  
Is blither than the widow, by so wide  
A gulph the Master better is than I  
Who am His slave. A belted knight, I ride  
Forth His great Will to do or else to die  
As He may need my service or my life apply!"

## XLVII

“ A knight!” cried Galahad; “and dost thou ride  
O’er earth the wrong to cancel, joy to bring?  
Art thou such knight?” “ ’Tis so I try,” replied  
The other. “ Dost thou know our lord the king?  
Could I be one like thee? Oh, could I string  
Such falchion from my belt as are thy twain?”  
“ Yea,” answered he, “ God-willing, that same  
          thing  
Thou’lt be eftsoons!” Nor did the child remain  
But “ I’ll ask Mother!” calling, tripped he o’er  
          the plain.

## XLVIII

Sir Balin followed: soon, a stately tower  
Rose o'er the treetops: as the keep they neared  
The wide portcullis fell with grating power  
And in the slowly oping door appeared  
A lady and an one whose long, gray beard  
Pronounced him Merlin, and between the twain  
Smiled little Galahad, whose face, upreared,  
Besought a kiss, got one, besought again,  
Till that the dame must blush and discontent must  
    feign.

## XLIX

That night slept Balin in the hall, but ere  
He, of his arms undight, had gone to rest  
The wizard Merlin made his side and there  
Warned him in words that near to orders pressed  
How he should act, and thus his charge addressed:  
“ Ask not the child; too soon, thy journeys o’er,  
Thou nearest that sad battle when thy breast,  
Pierced by cold steel, shall beat, ah, nevermore,  
Till that the angel’s trump shall call thee from  
death’s shore!”

## L

“ Ask not the child! His time hath not appeared,  
Nor can the mother spare her one bright flower  
Yet from her side: but when his prime hath  
neared

Then shall he be such man as evil's power  
Can never sully: such as in his hour  
Shall ne'er surpassed be in martial feat:  
A maiden knight: and those dark clouds that  
lower  
Around the dolorous stroke thine hand shalt mete  
His faith will scatter and to dolour bring defeat!”

## LI

So Balin on the morrow thanked the dame  
For her kind welcome and his steps addressed  
Upon his way, although, with eyes aflame  
With childhood's tears, the boy behind him  
    pressed  
And begged be taken. Balin, travelling west,  
Again met Garlon and another knight  
By churlish stroke was lost: but Balin, stressed  
By passion, urged his charger day and night,  
Taught by those sounds which Garlon's cloak  
    could not enblight .

## LII

On, on, through weary city and through town,  
Through tangled thickets, over grassy plain,  
Past towers and hovels, hills with hazel crown  
And vales with rivers threaded, nor could gain  
One pace the dastard, under murder's bane,  
Upon the true knight, though he could not see,  
Till that, some castle nearing, Garlon fain  
Threw off the cloak of darkness, for that he  
Would seek admittance thereto, from his foe be  
free!



### LIII

Now there was tourney in King Pellam's court  
And all the knights fro' all the country round  
Engathered were to take their hand i' th' sport,  
Each hoping to be mighty victor found,  
The others vanquished and himself fair crowned;  
So that Sir Balin entered unforbid  
(Unknown as one who Garlon's steps did hound—  
The king's own cousin) and, as others did,  
He to a chamber passed, from all his purpose hid.

# LIV

There he endight a scarlet festal gown  
 With gold embroidered, for the feast in hall  
 Was serving, nor had any yet gone down  
 Unto the lists; but when they him did call  
 To lay his weapon by (for so they all)  
 Fro's right the Dolorous Blade unbuckled he,  
 But at his left, beneath his outer shawl,  
 Kept close the other sword, for that in fee  
 He knew not when he'd need such falchion griev-  
     ously.

# LV

Now this King Pellam was a man of worth  
 (How foul his cousin were;) of charity  
 And worship none were more, for he by birth  
 Descent could trace, and by a noble tree,  
 Fro' him that Joseph hight of Arim'thee,  
 Who owned the tomb where they our Lord did lay  
 In distant Judah, and 'twere none but he  
 Might first enplant in Apostolic day  
 The seed of Christian faith in yon fair British clay.

## LVI

And he brought there with him the Holy Grail,  
The lance wherewith our Master's side were smote  
And other relics, which he did not fail  
To give his son, whose whole life were devote  
To their safe-keeping: so in time they mote  
Come down to Pellam; who this castle reared  
For their more sure protection, as is wrote  
Fair in his life (oh, that it were besmeared  
With harboring a dastard knight, and foully  
feared!)

## LVII

An holy castle 'twere, whose flaming arch  
Seemed girt with rainbow hues, whose bastions  
wide

Did glow with light, e'en as the skies in March  
When fair Aurora from the north doth glide  
Anent the sky: it were as though the pride  
Of new Jerusalem to earth were brought  
And there established, ne'er to be espied  
Save with such reverence as the priests have taught  
Is due to Mother Church, by pious footsteps sought.

## LVIII

King Pellam, rising in his eastern chair,  
Had scarce begun his welcome when espied  
Base Garlon noble Balin sitting there:  
Then 'fore the court (may ill him e'er betide!)  
Strode he with flaming face to th' farther side  
And dealt with back o's hand an angry blow  
Across Sir Balin's face, who might not bide  
But drew the Irish sword and laid him low  
Dead i' the dust, a fee well earned and long ago.

## LIX

“ Thus to all traitors!” Balin cried and strove,  
With flaming face and trembling lips, the deed  
To the dark, muttering crowd (a savage drove)  
To justify; but Pellam, taking lead,  
Defiance offered him who thus caused bleed  
A foeman in a peaceful house: a pike  
Then siezing (for so wrath ’gainst right would plead)  
He cut the knight, who fain a blow would strike  
But ’gainst a column brake his broadsword, folly-  
like!

## LX

Thus armless fled Sir Balin from the room  
(Pressed by the king who brandished pike in hand)  
On, ever onward, through the dismal gloom,  
Fro' hall to entrance, through the throne room  
    grand,  
'Neath archways mighty, up the stair's wide band,  
Past fifty chambers and then back again,  
O'er barracks where dull yeomen gaping stand;  
'Neath turrets where blunt warders sentry feign,  
Without one stop, yet nowhere could he blade  
    attain!



## LXI

Through all the castle Balin fled, nor would  
The monarch give him rest till that he gained  
A golden door beneath an onyx hood  
Which oping, there he found a lance, Blood-  
stained  
And time-dulled, near a grail round which re-  
mained  
An halo (sacred cup). This lance he took  
His right hand in, although the staff him pained  
As 'twere electric, and it fiercely shook  
Before King Pellam: then the Dolorous Blow he  
strook!

## LXII

Sad stroke! Sad cause! That this so holy wood  
Had pierced a Savior's side and caused to flow  
The mingled Blood and water which has stood  
A sign to all who peace and calm would know  
Throughout the ages, with such deadly blow  
In human quarrel now must wielded be!  
Alas! When will that peace 'mongst men below  
Prevail, He taught His saints in Galilee?  
'Tis for this peace, oh Lord, Thou see'st our bended  
knee!

### LXIII

Down fell the castle, beam from beam distrent,  
An hundred knights and ladies crushing there  
Aneath the wreckage, through the wicked bent  
Of Garlon slain: but, lo, and angel bare  
That cup and lance aloft till that some fair  
And virtuous life should them regain to men.  
King Pellam lay in swoond, but he, the slayer  
Of wicked Garlon, lived and found again,  
Unhurt, his Dolorous Blade and so passed o'er  
the fen.

## LXIV

Sir Balin left the place of grief, bowed low  
With sorrow: through a weary land he strode  
Where wretched men and raving maids in woe  
Called out to him: "Oh, Balin, see the goad  
Thou'st fitted to our necks!" The very road,  
Now thick with rocks that erst so lovely were,  
Seemed to distrust him and to the abode  
Of weariness him led, and e'en the air  
With sulphurous gas was dark that erst had been  
so fair!

## LXV

At last Sir Balin at a river ford  
Met with a stranger knight who would the way  
Dispute, and fiercely each to each they scored  
Deep with their steel, until the weary day  
Drew to a close, and so a forced stay  
Came to their tired arms: then, helmets off,  
Each laid him down to die: too long delay:  
Lo, Balan! who a stranger helm did doff  
That he with Balin travel might through Death's  
dark slough!

## LXVI

And so the Wizard's prophesy came true  
And Balin by his best friend's hand was slain;  
His brother's own: today, a mighty yew  
Grows o'er the grave where each were slowly ta'en  
And laid together; and the yellow grain  
Nods round the spot: oh, shed a bitter tear  
For these two bretheren, stranger, when you gain  
This solemn place, and one short prayer uprear  
That yonder they may know a happier fate than  
here!

## LXVII

It may hap, friend, thy later years shall be,  
Like Balin's, lost through cold, remorseless fate,  
And that thine hand, unwitting, earn his fee:  
But, come what may, do thou both early, late,  
Portray his spotless life: ne'er be the state  
Of Garlon thine: and harbor not thou ill  
Within thine hall, as did King Pellam great:  
Then, if thy life be short, remember still  
Another, grander life lies 'yond Death's sluggish  
rill.















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